

Georgia's Certified Work Ready Community Initiative

Coming January 2007



Executive Summary

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Background

All communities in Georgia have a desire to recruit new industry while supporting their existing businesses to ensure that they have healthy economic growth that leads to improved quality of life. In order to recruit new businesses, communities must demonstrate that they have a workforce capable of filling these new jobs. Companies consistently tell local community leaders they cannot find the skilled labor force to fill their existing job vacancies nor their changing labor needs. Business and industry are making new location decisions based on availability of the existing and future workforce pipeline. Currently, communities have to assemble graduation, GED, labor and other data from multiple agencies to document their workforce capabilities. Often this data is insufficient in validating an existing labor force which then presents a challenge for businesses to make informed workforce decisions. While Georgia's training programs lead the nation in providing customized services for business and industry, there exists a gap in validating the existence of a workforce pipeline ready to be trained.

In response to this need, Governor Sonny Perdue in partnership with the Georgia Chamber of Commerce is launching a *voluntary* initiative whereby Georgia's communities can validate their workforce and demonstrate they have a qualified pool of jobseekers that are "work ready" through the creation of Georgia's **Certified Work Ready Community**. This effort is being coordinated by the Governor's Office of Workforce Development.

The purpose of Georgia's **Certified Work Ready Community** initiative is to provide counties with a framework to validate that they have a skilled worker force ready to fill the current and future jobs. The certification criteria are county based, and individual counties must show a commitment to **improving their high school graduation rates** and that residents in various specified labor market groups have successfully attained a Georgia **Work Ready Certificate**. Communities that successfully meet the criteria will be recognized by the Governor and the Georgia Chamber of Commerce as a **Certified Work Ready Community**. The following benefits of establishing Georgia's **Certified Work Ready Community** initiative are envisioned:

- **Economic Development** – Communities receiving the **Certified Work Ready** recognition will be able to attract new business and industry because the skill and knowledge level of the workforce pipeline can be validated to a company's job requirements;

- **Workforce Development** - Communities will be progressive, effective and successful in enhancing their long-term competitiveness by creating validated skilled labor pool through encouraging their eligible workforce to obtain a **Georgia Work Ready Certificate**;
- **Incumbent Worker Training** – Under employed workers will enhance their employability and career potential by obtaining a **Work Ready Certificate** that can be used to prepare them for advanced training. As incumbent workers advance in their careers, communities benefit by entry level positions become available to jobseekers;
- **Community Partnerships** – Local education, economic development and workforce development professionals will leverage resources in support of becoming a ‘work ready’ community; and,
- **Quality of Life** – Communities can improve their quality of life by encouraging **every student to earn a high school diploma** and life long learning through supporting **adults obtaining a Georgia Work Ready Certificate**.

Program Overview

Purpose

To provide a framework for Georgia communities to document and validate that they have a workforce in significant numbers capable of filling the job requirements for existing companies and to use this framework to recruit new business and industry to their region.

Objectives

- Enhance the employment opportunities and standard of living of Georgia residents;
- Demonstrate to potential businesses and corporations that a community has the workforce pipeline with the skills required to be trainable for careers in the global economy; and
- Enhance economic development efforts across the state.

Certification Criteria

The certification criteria will be county based where by a percentage of individuals in the following groups will have successfully completed Georgia’s **Work Ready Certificate**:

Group	Suggested Percentage Successfully Obtaining Georgia Work Ready Certificate
Existing Workforce Private Sector	5%
Existing Workforce Local, State or Federal Government	5%
High School Graduates Entering Workforce	20%
GED	20%
Technical College Graduates	20%
Unemployed Adults	20%
High School Students	Communities must demonstrate a commitment to improving their high school graduation rate.

Partners:

Governor Sonny Perdue and Georgia Chamber of Commerce

Partnering Agencies and Supporters (Partial List)

- Governor's Office of Workforce Development
- Department of Community Affairs
- Department of Education
- Department of Technical and Adult Education
- Georgia Department of Economic Development
- University System of Georgia
- State Workforce Investment Board
- Georgia Employer's Association
- Metro Atlanta Chamber of Commerce
- Georgia Mountains Workforce Investment Board - Area 2
- United Parcel Service
- Georgia Power
- Sizemore, Inc
- J.M. Huber Corporation
- Denon Digital, LLC
- Milsco Manufacturing Company
- Milliken and Company
- IBM
- Reynolds Plantation
- Junior Achievement

For More Information

Visit the website at www.gaworkready.org or email us at: info@gaworkready.org
Contact Information:

Debra Lyons
Program Manager
Governor's Office of Workforce Development
270 Washington Street, Suite 5-191
Atlanta, Georgia 30334

Phone: 404-463-5283